

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for making a restructured seafood product, comprising:

(1) modifying the surfaces of more than one seafood portions by a first step comprising:

(a) obtaining more than one seafood portions;

[(a)](b) treating the surfaces of the more than one seafood portion portions with at least one of phosphate and salt for a sufficient time of no more than 10 minutes and at a sufficient temperature of no more than 32°F to produce surface-modified seafood portions;

(2) preparing a surimi-based binder by a second step comprising:

(a) obtaining surimi;

(b) mixing the surimi with at least one of a phosphate and salt, a starch, and water to produce a surimi-based binder;

[(b)](3) coating the modified surfaces of the seafood portions with [[a]] the surimi-based binder containing at least one of phosphate and salt, the amount of binder being less than 10 wt.% of the seafood product; [[and]]

[(c)](4) forming the binder-coated, surface-modified seafood portions into a restructured product, the product including about 1 wt.% or less phosphate and/or salt and the seafood portions being one of either chunks or fillets; and

(5) elevating the temperature of the restructured product to above 32°F for a period sufficient to set the binder.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the sufficient time is about 30 seconds to about 2 to 3 minutes.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the sufficient temperature is about 24°F to about 28°F.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising treating the surfaces of more than one seafood portion with phosphate and salt.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the salt is sodium chloride and the phosphate is a polyphosphate.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein the salt is sodium chloride and the phosphate is tetrasodium pyrophosphate.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the seafood portions are one of at least a salmon, a whitefish, and a shellfish.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently amended) The method of Claim [[8]] 1, wherein the surimi-based binder is derived from one of at least a salmon, a whitefish, and a shellfish.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the seafood portions are derived from a salmon and the binder is derived from a salmon.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the seafood portions are randomly oriented throughout the product.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the portions are methodically oriented throughout the product.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the binder comprises about 3% to about 7% by weight of the product.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the binder comprises 40% to about 70% surimi by weight.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the binder comprises about 23% to about 53% water by weight.

16-18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising elevating the temperature of the product to about 350°F for about 15 seconds.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising cooking the exterior surface of the product to a depth no more than about 1 mm.

21. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the temperature of the seafood portions does not exceed 28°F during steps (a), (b), (1), (2), and [(c)] (3).

22. (Canceled)

23. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the average seafood portion weight is no more than 1 ounce.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the seafood portions are fillets.

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25. (Original) The method of Claim 24, wherein the fillets are molded into a shape in a nonfrozen condition.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 24, wherein the average weight of fillets does not exceed 4 ounces.

27. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the product has at least one rounded surface.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the binder comprises less than 5% by weight of the product.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the binder comprises greater than 30% water by weight.

30. (Currently amended) A method for making a restructured seafood product comprising:

~~treating a plurality of seafood portions with a phosphate and/or salt for a sufficient time and at a temperature of greater than 28°F to free binding sites on the surface of the seafood portions;~~

to a plurality of seafood portions that have not been modified on the surfaces by a phosphate or salt, adding a surimi-based binder containing at least one of phosphate and salt and having functional groups suitable to attach to [[said]] binding sites created on the surface of the seafood portions through the action of the phosphate and/or salt in the surimi-based binder, said attachment occurring through covalent and/or hydrogen bonding, the product including about 1 wt.% or less phosphate and/or salt; [[and]]

forming the seafood portions into a restructured seafood product, wherein the binder comprises less than 10% by weight of the product and the seafood portions being one of either chunks or fillets; and

elevating the temperature of the restructured product to above 32°F for a period sufficient to set the binder.

31. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 30, wherein the temperature is not more than about 32°F.

32. (Previously presented) A restructured seafood product, comprising:
randomly arranged seafood portions being one of either chunks or fillets, said portions being bonded together through covalent and/or hydrogen bonding with a combination of a gelatinous material brought about through surface modification of the native proteins in the seafood portions and less than 10% by weight of a surimi-based binder bonding to said gelatinous material; and

phosphate and/or salt in an amount of about 1 wt.% or less of the restructured product.

33. (Previously presented) A restructured seafood product, comprising:
methodically arranged seafood portions being one of either chunks or fillets, said portions being bonded together through covalent and/or hydrogen bonding with a combination of a gelatinous material brought about through surface modification of the native proteins in the seafood portions, using phosphate, and less than 10% by weight of a surimi-based binder bonding to said gelatinous material; and

phosphate and/or salt in an amount of about 1 wt. % or less of the restructured product.

34-37. (Canceled)

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38. (New) The product of Claim 32, wherein the seafood portions are frozen.
39. (New) The product of Claim 33, wherein the seafood portions are frozen.
40. (New) A method for making a restructured seafood product, comprising:
 - (1) modifying the surfaces of a plurality of frozen seafood portions by a first step comprising:
 - (a) obtaining a plurality of frozen seafood portions;
 - (b) treating the surfaces of the plurality of frozen seafood portions with a phosphate or salt for a sufficient time and at a sufficient temperature to produce surface-modified frozen seafood portions;
 - (2) preparing a surimi-based binder by a second step comprising:
 - (a) obtaining surimi;
 - (b) mixing the surimi with a phosphate or salt, water, and optionally a starch to produce a surimi-based binder;
 - (3) coating the modified surfaces of the frozen seafood portions with the surimi-based binder, the amount of binder being less than 10 wt.% of the seafood product;
 - (4) forming the binder-coated, surface-modified frozen seafood portions into a restructured product, the product including about 1 wt.% or less phosphate and/or salt and the frozen seafood portions being either chunks or fillets; and
 - (5) elevating the temperature of the restructured product to above 32°F for a period sufficient to set the binder.

41. (New) A method for making a restructured seafood product comprising:
to a plurality of frozen seafood portions that have not been modified on the surfaces by a phosphate or salt, adding a surimi-based binder containing phosphate or salt and having

functional groups suitable to attach to binding sites created on the surfaces of the frozen seafood portions through the action of the phosphate and/or salt in the surimi-based binder, said attachment occurring through covalent and/or hydrogen bonding, the product including about 1 wt.% or less phosphate and/or salt;

forming the frozen seafood portions into a restructured seafood product, wherein the binder comprises less than 10% by weight of the product and the frozen seafood portions are chunks or fillets; and

elevating the temperature of the restructured product to above 32°F for a period sufficient to set the binder.

42. (New) A method for making a restructured seafood product comprising:

treating a plurality of frozen seafood portions with a phosphate or salt to free binding sites on the surfaces of the frozen seafood portions;

adding a surimi-based binder containing a phosphate or salt and having functional groups suitable to attach to the binding sites created on the surfaces of the frozen seafood portions, said attachment occurring through covalent and/or hydrogen bonding, the product including about 1 wt.% or less phosphate and/or salt;

forming the frozen seafood portions into a restructured seafood product, wherein the binder comprises less than 10% by weight of the product and the frozen seafood portions are chunks or fillets; and

elevating the temperature of the restructured product to above 32°F for a period sufficient to set the binder.